

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

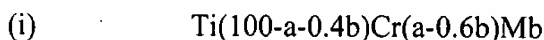
Kindly cancel claims 24, 25, 33, 35 and 36, without prejudice.

Please amend claims 22 and 23, as follows:

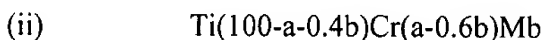
Claims 1-21 (canceled)

Claim 22 (currently amended): A process for producing a hydrogen storage metal alloy having a main phase with body-centered cubic structure wherein the body-centered cubic structure phase enables adsorption and desorption of hydrogen, comprising the steps of:

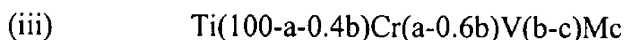
(1) providing a starting mixture which has a composition of the following general composition formula:



wherein M is vanadium (V), provided that $20 \leq a \text{ (at\%)} \leq 80$, and $0 < b \text{ (at\%)} < 10$; or



wherein M is at least a member selected from molybdenum (Mo) and tungsten (W), wherein $20 \leq a \text{ (at\%)} \leq 80$, $0 < b \text{ (at\%)} < 5$, and when M is W said metal alloy has a hydrogen storage capacity of at least 2.6 mass % or more; or



wherein M is at least a member selected from molybdenum (Mo) and tungsten (W), wherein $[20 \leq a \text{ (at\%)} \leq 80, 0 \leq b \text{ (at\%)} \leq 10, \text{ and } 0 \leq c \text{ (at\%)} < 5,]$

$20 \leq a \text{ (at\%)} \leq 80, 0 < b \text{ (at\%)} \leq 10, \text{ and } 0 < c \text{ (at\%)} < 5$ ~~excluding the case where (1) $b = 0$ and $c = 0$ and (2) $b = 10$ and $c = 0$; or~~



wherein $20 \leq a \text{ (at\%)} \leq 80$;

(2) repeatedly melting and solidifying the starting mixture to form a heated homogeneous alloy;

(3) maintaining the heated homogeneous alloy at a temperature of at least 1400°C within a range just below the melting point of the alloy for a predetermined time of from 1 minute to 2 hours; and

(4) rapidly cooling the alloy from step (3) in iced water.

Claim 23 (currently amended): The process of Claim 22 wherein said melting and ~~solidification operations~~ solidifying are carried out repeatedly for predetermined times in step (2).

Claims 24-25 (canceled)

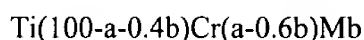
Claim 26 (previously presented): The process of Claim 22 wherein the starting mixture contains an additional element X admixed at its atom % concentration, $d \text{ (at\%)}$, ranging within $0 \leq d \text{ (at\%)} \leq 20$ and includes at least one or more other elements selected from the group consisting of Al, Ge, Ga, Si, Au and Pt.

Claim 27 (previously presented): The process of Claim 22 wherein the starting mixture contains an additional element T admixed at its atom % concentration, $e \text{ (at\%)}$, ranging within $0 \leq e \text{ (at\%)} \leq 10$ and includes at least one or more other elements selected from the group consisting of Nb, Ta, Mn, Fe, Al, B, C, Co, Cu, Ga, Ge, a lanthanoid metal, N, Ni, P, and Si.

Claim 28 (previously presented): The process of Claim 26 wherein the starting mixture contains an additional element T admixed at its atom % concentration, $e \text{ (at\%)}$, ranging within

$0 \leq e \text{ (at\%)} \leq 10$ and includes at least one or more other elements selected from the group consisting of Nb, Ta, Mn, Fe, Al, B, C, Co, Cu, Ga, Ge, a lanthanoid metal, N, Ni, P, and Si.

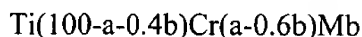
Claim 29 (previously presented): The process of Claim 22 wherein the starting mixture has a composition of the following general composition formula:



wherein M is vanadium (V), provided that $20 \leq a \text{ (at\%)} \leq 80$, and $0 < b \text{ (at\%)} < 10$.

Claim 30 (previously presented): The process of Claim 29 wherein a level of the constituent element V contained in the mixture is within a range of $6 \pm 2 \text{ at \%}$.

Claim 31 (previously presented): The process of Claim 22 wherein the starting mixture has a composition of the following general composition formula:



wherein M is at least a member selected from molybdenum (Mo) and tungsten (W), wherein $20 \leq a \text{ (at\%)} \leq 80$, $0 < b \text{ (at\%)} < 5$, and when M is W said resulting metal alloy has the hydrogen storage capacity of at least 2.6 mass % or more.

Claim 32 (previously presented): The process of Claim 31 wherein a level each of the constituent element Mo and/or W contained in the starting mixture is within a range of $3 \pm 1.5 \text{ at \%}$.

Claim 33 (canceled)

Claim 34 (original): The process of Claim 24 wherein in step (3) the alloy is kept at the temperature of at least 1400°C or higher and just below the melting point of the alloy.

Claims 35-36 (canceled)

Claim 37 (previously presented): The process of Claim 22 wherein the predetermined time range in step (3) is from 1 minute to 1.9 hours.

Claim 38 (previously presented): The process of Claim 22 wherein the predetermined time range in step (3) is from 1 minute to 100 minutes.

Claim 39 (previously presented): The process of Claim 22 wherein the predetermined time range in step (3) is from 1 minute to 1 hour.

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